

City of Corunna
Special Council Meeting
Thursday, September 6, 2001

Present: Billis, Bayless, Dumond, Hornus, Mehig, Ockerman, Runyan.

Absent: None.

Guests: Joe Sawyer, City Manager; Janet Washburn, Parks and Recreation Director; Steve Corey; Bill Striggow; Janeene Cenkush; and other concerned citizens.

The meeting was called to order in the City Council Chambers by Mayor Billis at 9:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF SEVEN CHARTER CHANGES COMPRISED IN TWELVE BALLOT

QUESTIONS: Joe Sawyer stated he appreciated the fact that there was full council representation on the short notice. He further stated there was a request to withdraw one proposed amendment that went to council in July, which was ballot question number 12. He also stated the charter commission members were present and the members were in agreement with removing ballot question number 12, which deals with emergency situations. Mr. Sawyer explained the issue was not under the appropriate section of the charter as proposed because the change was vesting authorities under the mayor, councilmembers and city manager section. The issue was also vesting that authority back into the purchasing agent, but the purchasing agent can only sell or buy personal property. He further explained the charter commission agrees that emergency purchases can be handled through the purchasing ordinance. Mayor Billis asked the charter commission if they made the recommendation to Mr. Sawyer. Steve Corey advised no, Mr. Sawyer brought the situation to the commission's attention, and the commission discussed the issue. Councilperson Dumond asked if the recommendation was the charter commission's recommendation. Mr. Corey advised yes. It gets kind of confusing in some respects because in the section the council approved before is under the functions and duties of the city manager, and it looks like the current charter is adequate to cover everything. He further advised there has not been an ordinance written, which is being requested by the charter commission. Mayor Billis asked if the ordinance would pertain to a purchasing agent. Mr. Corey advised yes and the city manager. He proceeded to read Section 4.7 (e)(1) and Section 6.5 of the city charter. He further advised he did not believe an ordinance was done. Mayor Billis advised he did not think an ordinance was written either. Mr. Corey advised without the ordinance the charter commission came to the conclusion that the charter was open to any kind of interpretation. Councilperson Dumond asked if the city was covered since the ordinance is in the charter. Mr. Corey advised there is no ordinance in the charter. An ordinance is separate from the charter. He further advised the charter states an ordinance needs to be written, but no ordinance has been written that the charter commission is aware of. Mayor Billis asked if the information the council had before them was the information the charter commission had received from Mr. Burlingame as far as the process used to submit the changes to and from the attorney general's office. Mr. Corey advised yes. This change was approved, but he did not think the information should be sent back to Mr. Ellsworth if nothing is going to be changed.

Mr. Corey further advised the other changes the charter commission was requesting tonight are the final group that went to Mr. Ellsworth for approval. Mr. Corey also advised that Mr. Burlingame felt the changes could go right to the city council, but the charter commission felt they should review the changes since the commission was making a recommendation to the council. Mr. Corey stated the charter commission approved all of the proposed changes in the final group. Councilperson Dumond stated it seemed that something could be taken out since nothing was being changed. Mr. Corey advised the proposed changes do not change the subject of what the charter commission originally had requested. Mayor Billis asked Mr. Corey to go over each change. Mr. Corey stated he would try. He explained Section 3.15 of the current charter states if there are no nominating petitions for an election then council will appoint someone to be on the ballot. The charter commission felt more than one person should be appointed by the council, and the commission also added the mayor to this section because there was nothing that addressed what could be done if no one ran for mayor. He further explained as a result ballot questions three and four have to pass. Councilperson Dumond asked if both changes have to be approved. Mr. Corey advised yes. He further advised the change to Section 3.23 added the word "appointed" to the last sentence. He also advised ballot questions six and seven both have to pass. Councilperson Runyan stated he thought a councilperson had to go through a cycle of a council before anybody got any compensation. Mr. Corey advised the whole council has to change before the new increase takes place. He further advised there are two changes to Section 4.7. The first one is to delete (e)(2), which is ballot question number 12 that council had previously approved, and the other change effects residency requirements, which are illegal anyway. Ms. Long advised footnotes would be put on the pages to let the people know that section such and such is inactive by state law. Mr. Corey stated ballot question number 13 is a renumbering ballot proposal. He further stated Section 4.8 defines the privileges of the mayor pro-tem because the current charter does not define what the mayor pro-tem does. He also stated Section 5.5 changes high misdemeanors that were changed by state statute from 90 to 93 days and the fine changes from \$300 to \$500. Councilperson Dumond asked if this change brought the city's charter up to date with state statutes. Mr. Corey advised yes. Councilperson Runyan asked if the mayor pro-tem has the right to marry people. Mr. Corey advised he did not think so since the mayor pro-tem was only acting as the mayor for a specific meeting. He further advised Section 6.14 changes the board of review from the second Monday to the second Wednesday in March of each year. This section also changes the way a person can object to their assessment and changes the board of review second session from the fourth Monday to the fourth Wednesday. Dumond moved, Hornus seconded to approve the 12 ballot questions presented to the city council by the charter commission as evidenced by the documents presented this evening.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Hornus, Mehig, Dumond, Bayless, Ockerman, Runyan.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

Dumond moved, Hornus seconded to strike amendment ballot question number 12, Section No. 4.7 (e)(2), as presented by the charter commission from the ballot questions that were previously approved.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Dumond, Hornus, Ockerman, Mehigh, Runyan, Bayless.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

Councilperson Ockerman stated the city has three wards but not equal population in each ward. He further stated the city has such a difficult time trying to get somebody in ward three. He also stated he was concerned whether the city council was serving the community as the council should by having representation for the number of people in the other two wards since there is such a disparity between ward three and wards one and two. Councilperson Ockerman asked if the charter commission addressed the issue. Mr. Corey advised the charter commission had a long conversation with Bus Spaniola a year or so ago about reapportionment, but there were arguments to leave the wards as they are. Councilperson Ockerman stated that is a real statement. Mr. Corey advised the issues were complicated, but the commission made its decision and moved on. Mayor Billis stated he was reading through some state information, and the information indicated that a city should revise its charter approximately every ten years. Councilperson Runyan stated the third ward would eventually have more population than the first or second ward due to the amount of city property that extends to Escott Road. Councilperson Mehigh stated the charter spells out that the city shall have three wards, but it does not spell out boundaries. He asked if council could change the boundaries based on the population figures. Mr. Corey advised he did not know how that would work. Ms. Long advised the charter commission started to do that but Mr. Spaniola stated from his experience in government the charter commission does not want to do this and he gave all kinds of reasons. Mayor Billis stated he was at that meeting and Mr. Spaniola gave very good reasons. Councilperson Dumond stated the State of Michigan was reapportioned including Shiawassee County. Councilperson Bayless advised a reapportionment has to be done every ten years when there is a census. Councilperson Dumond commended the charter commission members for the tremendous amount of work they put into the charter amendments. Ms. Long stated she hated to see the charter review end because she has enjoyed the meetings and has learned a lot about Corunna history.

ADJOURN: Hornus moved to adjourn.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Ockerman, Dumond, Hornus, Runyan, Bayless, Mehigh.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED Time was 10:12 p.m.

DR. JAMES BILLIS, MAYOR

YVONNE F. LONG, CITY CLERK